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ABSTRACT

In recognition of a need in the Buffalo area, the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo) established the Japanese Language and Culture Program for Business People and Students (JLCP) within the university's Center for Critical Languages. JLCP is a 3-year, 6-semester certificate program open to anyone with at least a high school diploma. The goal is to instruct and train participants in both spoken and written Japanese language communication skills, with emphasis on business Japanese, and in various aspects of Japanese culture with emphasis on business customs and practices. The program has three components: language, culture, and video lab. Four administrators manage the program, which uses native Japanese speakers as instructors. Students are recruited from 300 selected companies and other educational institutions in the Buffalo (New York) area; 54 people, mostly managers and sales people, have taken at least one class to date. Participants who want more practice outside of class are matched with a volunteer Japanese language conversation partner who is a student enrolled in the Intensive English Language Institute of the university. It is concluded that although JLCP is still new and needs improvement, programs like it will probably appear in other cities. Contains 11 references. (LB)

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DEVELOPING A JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAM
FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE AND STUDENTS

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I. Introduction

With the trend of increasing globalization of economies throughout the world, cross-cultural awareness and foreign language ability are becoming not only increasingly popular but also necessary. For various international companies, both large and small, understanding other cultures and being able to communicate in a foreign language helps to ensure their survival and development. This trend accurately describes the case of many American companies which either plan to conduct or already are conducting business with Japan. The need of these companies to develop cultural awareness and language ability increases year by year as more transactions are made between the two countries.

However, many American business people and business students frequently face two problems when trying to attend a Japanese language and culture program. First, there are few Japanese programs available which meet the needs and interests of business people. Secondly, the times set for classes are often inconvenient so that participation is difficult. Considering these two problems of business people in the Buffalo area, the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo hereafter) established the "Japanese Language and Culture Program for Business People and Students (JLCP hereafter)." The purpose of this paper is to describe both the background and the structure of the program, respectively.

II. Rationale

The Center for Critical Languages at SUNY-Buffalo offers Japanese language classes from first-year elementary Japanese 191 up to third-year Japanese 196 (a three-year, six-semester program). Japanese has been offered by the Center for the past twenty years using what is called a Self-Instructional Language Program Principle. Recently, the average enrollment per semester is approximately 100 students. Of these, between 10 and 15 are not matriculated students of the university, but are working people. The self-instructional Japanese program poses three problems for these working people.

1. The method of self-instruction language learning is time-consuming and because of their full-time work, the students do not have enough time to study. Consequently, they tend to fall behind the other students, who are mostly full-time university students.
2. The self-instruction classes are not always available in the evening when working people can attend, because of not only a lack of available instructors (tutors) but also the difficulty of finding a time convenient for all of the classmates.
3. The self-instruction language program excludes the cultural aspects of Japan including any aspects of Japanese business practices.

Despite these problems of the Japanese self-instructional program, the number of working people in the Buffalo area who want to learn both Japanese language and culture including Japanese business practices has been steadily increasing. This finding was made by the Center through three sources: (a) direct inquiries made to the Center about the Japanese program from working people;

(b) a questionnaire administered to all of the students taking the Japanese classes each semester over the past year; and (c) informal interviews or conversation with some of the students in the Japanese classes. Based upon the data obtained, a committee was formed to establish a new program to meet the needs and interests of prospective students. During the spring of 1990, the program administration and staff were chosen and the program began in the summer of 1990. The next section describes the statement and structure of the program, which is just one year old.

III. Statement and Goal of the Program

The Japanese Language and Culture Program of SUNY-Buffalo is a three-year, six-semester certificate program open to anyone who holds at least a high school diploma. Two semesters are offered for the beginning level (Japanese 191 & 192), two semesters for intermediate level (Japanese 193 & 194); and two semesters for advanced level (Japanese 195 & 196). Depending upon the participant's background in Japanese language studies and results of a placement test, he or she can take any level of class for any semester if at least five students are registered for the class. After successful completion of a course, participants receive a certificate each semester. For an additional fee, participants can earn four undergraduate credits from the university.

The goal of the program is to instruct and train the participants in (a) the Japanese language communication skills in both spoken and written with some emphasis on business Japanese

and (b) the various aspects of Japanese culture with a heavy emphasis on Japanese business customs and practices. The latter goal is to better prepare the participants for dealing with Japanese people in work settings such as business meetings, presentations, negotiations and correspondence as well as social settings such as eating, drinking and entertaining. General functional communication settings such as traveling and shopping are also included. An important note about the goal statement is that even with the achievement of the highest level language class, which is the equivalent of a third-year university Japanese course, it is not realistic for the participants to expect to be able to handle business meetings, presentations, newspaper articles, etc. solely in Japanese. Much more intensive and extensive studies of the language are necessary to achieve such proficiency in the language.

To meet both of the goals listed above, the program at any level consists of three components: (a) a language component, (b) a culture component and (c) a video lab component. These three components are discussed in detail in the next section.

IV. Structure of the Program

A. Administration and Teaching Staff

The JLCP is administered by the Center for Critical Languages. There are four administrative staff: a director, an assistant director, an administrative coordinator, and an academic coordinator. The director's role is to supervise the entire

operation of the program, while the assistant director's role is to steer the budget planning and authorize the hiring of instructors and the purchase of materials for teaching such as videos, cassette tapes and texts. The administrative coordinator's role is to arrange the dates of the program each semester, to assist the directors with the budget, to publicize the program, to take care of student registration, paperwork and inquiries of students and to arrange the teaching materials as requested by the academic coordinator. The academic coordinator is responsible for developing the curriculum of the program including writing the syllabi, selecting and supervising teachers, choosing teaching methods and materials, creating evaluative means of the participants and coordinating with the directors and administrative coordinator.

The teaching staff are all native speakers of Japanese, who hold at least a master's degree in language education or a related area and have teaching experience. Currently, a team of four teachers is involved in the program: one with a Ph.D. in second/foreign language education, one with ABD in Sociology, two with MA degrees (Communication and Second Language Education). The teaching staff and its number change according to the number of participants and classes each semester.

B. The Participants

Recruitment of students is done by mailing out program brochures to approximately 300 selected companies and to other

universities and colleges in the Buffalo metropolitan area. Companies were selected by examining a list at the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce and selecting those which may currently or in the future have business dealings with Japanese companies. Advertisements were placed in the major newspaper of the area. The program announcement is made at least one month before the start of the semester to enable participants to inquire about the program and to make arrangements for attending. Over the last three semesters, approximately 150 inquiries were received and of these, 54 people have taken one or two classes so far. Of the 54 participants, 42 were working people and 12 were university students. The following chart shows the distribution of the students in terms of area of work.

WorkingPeople

<u>Position at work</u>	<u>Number</u>
Executive	5
Manager	20
Sales	12
Engineer	3
Researcher	1
Teacher	1

Sub-total: 42

CollegeStudents

<u>Field of Study</u>	<u>Number</u>
Business	6
Engineering	3
Law	2
History	1

Sub-total: 12

It seems that there are three primary reasons why some of the working people do not attend the program. The first is a time conflict between studying and their working schedule; secondly, the tuition and fees may be too high for those who are not supported by their company; and thirdly, a lack of sufficient motivation and need despite having an interest. For the university students, the fees of the program are in addition to the regular university tuition for those taking more than 15 credits. Also, the credits from JLCP are undergraduate credits and do not apply towards graduation credit for graduate students. However, despite these drawbacks, once registered for the program, no participant has withdrawn mid-way through a semester.

C. Academic Structure of Each Semester

This program is a ten-week program held each academic semester of the university, including summer. Classes meet two nights per week for three hours each from 5:30 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. Each night includes two sessions: a two-hour language component and a one-hour culture component. Every two weeks an hour and a half is spent in video lab watching language videos and selected culture videos under the supervision and instruction of the culture teacher. Each of these components is now described in more detail.

1. Language Component

The purpose of the language component is to present, explain, and provide practice with the basics and application of Japanese

language used in various speech situations such as social meetings, business and travel. This includes teaching fundamental sentence structures, vocabulary, pronunciation patterns and idiomatic expressions to deal with specific topics such as introductions, day, time, price, address, locations and invitations as well as more complicated sentence structures and expressing to deal with more abstract topics such as refusing, expressing preferences and opinions, description of facts and experiences and discussion of problems and plans. The proportion of English and Japanese as an instructional means for the language component is approximately as follows:

		English	Japanese
Elementary Levels	191	70%	30%
	192	50%	50%
Intermediate Levels	193	30%	70%
	194	10%	90%
Advanced Levels	195	0%	100%
	196	0%	100%

The Japanese writing system is not introduced until Japanese 192. This is so that 191 students can concentrate on mastery of the basic language structures and vocabulary. Students still are exposed to KANA because the text includes the KANA version of the dialogue and the new vocabulary. KANJI are introduced to intermediate and advanced students, whose text is written basically in Japanese rather than the Roman Alphabet.

The texts used in the program are listed below.

Japanese 191 }	<u>Japanese for Busy People I</u>
192 }	by the Association for Japanese-
	Language Teaching, Kodansha
	International/USA Ltd., 1989
Japanese 193 }	<u>Japanese for Busy People II</u>
194 }	by the Association for Japanese-
195 }	Language Teaching, Kodansha
196 }	International/USA Ltd., 1990

The reasons for using this particular text are three-fold: (1) the contents of the dialogues are up-to-date and practical; (2) the structure of each lesson is clear enough for learners to follow the book easily, yet each lesson is varied enough to avoid monotony and enable the learner to learn the language from various aspects (i.e. basic structure, vocabulary, various kinds of exercises and quizzes); 3. the text has corresponding cassette and video tapes at least for Book I, which matches the emphasis of the program on aural-oral rather than written communication.

2. Culture Component

The purpose of the culture component is to introduce students to and deepen their understanding of various aspects of Japanese culture, including Japanese business practices. The classes for the culture component are two hours per week, one hour per night.

Instruction is given primarily in English. Four texts have been used in the program for this component:

1. With Respect to the Japanese: A Guide for Americans by John Condon, Intercultural Press Inc., 1984

2. Japanese Etiquette by Tokyo YMCA, Charles Tuttle Co, Inc., 1987
3. NIPPON: The Land and Its People, by Nippon Steel Corp., Personnel Development Division, 1986.
4. Japanese Business Etiquette, by Diana Rowland, Warner Communication Co., 1985.

None of these books are intended for the cultural or business specialist but rather are for the general public who want to gain some knowledge about the Japanese culture and business practices. The plans for the program includes using more specialized materials for the advanced levels, which have yet to be offered.

In addition to these texts, a list of 64 articles from various sources is given to the students as supplementary reading. (See Appendix A.) According to their individual interests, students choose several articles to read and the program provides a copy of the article to them. Additionally, a series of cultural/business videos are shown in the video lab, which will be explained in the next section.

D. Video Lab Component

The video lab component serves two purposes: (1) to show the videos of basic skits which include the language studied in previous lessons. This allows students to learn more about how the language is used and the cultural information embedded in it. (2) to show cultural videos to further the students' cultural understanding of modern Japanese society as well as its traditions and business practices. The language videos supplement the

language text and the culture videos supplement the culture text, "NIPPON: The Land and Its People." The latter consists of 15 different topics, 9 of which have been shown in the program:

1. The Japanese Family
2. The Japanese Businessman
3. The Tradition of Performing Arts in Japan
4. Customs and Manners
5. The Taste of Japan
6. The Japanese and Nature
7. Japanese Society
8. Japanese Technology
9. Japan's Corporate System.

Tapes available from the university's media center are also used in addition to those listed above.

E. Conversation Partner Program

Those participants who want to have more practice in the target language outside of the classroom are matched with a volunteer Japanese conversation partner. The Japanese volunteers are students who are enrolled in the Intensive English Language Institute of the university. All arrangements for meetings are decided upon by each pair or group. Some sessions are held off campus at parks, lakes, malls and other sightseeing places. These conversational sessions have proven to be beneficial for both parties, not only because English and Japanese were eagerly used during the sessions, but also because each party learned more about each other's culture. On the average, each American student had at least two Japanese conversation partners.

F. Evaluation of the Program and the Students

It is very difficult to objectively evaluate the program due to the difficulty of measure the actual achievement of the students in the program, although certainly since many of the students are beginners there is progress. The amount of work which students can do at home may be limited and their backgrounds may be different. Evaluating the program based on the subjective student program evaluations is also difficult since the interests, needs and expectations of the students are varied. However, based on the questionnaire administered at the end of the summer and fall sessions, most of the students said that the program was much more beneficial than they had anticipated, particularly the culture component. They also said that learning the Japanese language was much more difficult and time-consuming than they had expected. However, the bottom line is that they all enjoyed the program a great deal.

As for the achievement of the students, we have found a great range among them, due in part to the factors mentioned above. Evaluation of students for the language component uses frequent quizzes, homework, a mid-term exam, and a final exam. Both the mid-term and final exam consist of oral and written sections. The cultural component requires a final paper on one topic, which is chosen by each student based on readings he/she has done.

A sad fact is that many of the participants in the Summer and Fall '90 programs could not continue their studies mainly because

of their working schedule even though classes are held in the evenings. Additional feedback is necessary before a clear picture can be obtained of the reasons for their discontinuation.

V. Conclusion

The JLCP is still very new and needs many improvements. However, I wanted to share with you the kind of program that we have designed in the Buffalo area, which is considered a domestic, medium-sized city, not an international city like New York City, Chicago or Los Angeles. Assuming the continuation of the trend towards economic globalization, small programs like JLCP will appear in more areas of the country and grow steadily. For the benefit of all, the sharing of knowledge by each programs, big or small should be carried out. Otherwise, programs like JLCP may not be developed further but may die out. The loss of business people with international minds, knowledge of foreign languages and cultures may result in economic loss and greater trade friction. In this sense, our role of training business people towards positive directions is of great importance and we should be fully aware of it.

APPENDIX A

ARTICLES ABOUT JAPAN

Compiled by Sadatoshi Tomizawa

Name: _____

Circle the number of five articles you are interested in reading.
You may also put a priority number.

1. American food chain stores in Japan
2. Bushido "Samurai Spirit"
3. College life in Japan
4. Japanese Education
5. Japan's economic dynamism
6. Juku "Private Cram Schools"
7. Kimono "Japanese Traditional Clothes"
9. The Japanese mind
10. Ma "Interior Designing in Japan"
11. Marriage
12. Missionaries' views on the Japanese
13. The Japanese mind seen through the poetic tradition
14. Native English speaking teachers in Japan
15. People learning the Japanese language
16. Rabbit hutches "crowded housing"
17. Religion in Japan
18. Savings
19. Tea ceremony
20. Japanese theater
21. The spirit of "Wa" "Harmony/Conformity"
22. Japanese Women
23. The Japanese work ethic

24. Japanese young people
25. Zen and the Japanese mind
26. A new city (688 billion-1.4 trillion) on Tokyo Bay in the year 2050
27. Educational reform
28. Tokyo University and its role
29. Japanese drama
30. Sources of contemporary Japanese culture
31. Japanese festivals
32. Hanko "A stamp or seal"
33. Hachimaki "headband"
34. Tatami mats
35. Kaigi "Japanese meeting style"
36. Keiyaku "A contract or agreement"
37. Meishi "The Japanese name card and its role"
38. Sumo wrestling
39. Ikebana "Flower arranging"
40. Bonsai "A potted, dwarfed tree or plant"
41. Origami "The art of folding paper into various objects"
42. Sho "The art of calligraphy"
43. Teien "Landscape gardening"
44. Judo
45. Mu "Nothingness"
46. The origin of the Japanese people
47. The origin of the Japanese nation
48. The history of Japan
49. The force behind Japan's rapid modernization

50. Cultural and historical relations with foreign countries
51. Government: The Emperor
Government system
Diplomacy
The name of the country and the national flag
52. Japan's economy
53. Business management
54. The family structure
55. The transportation system
56. Traditional dramas: Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku and music
57. Traditional arts and crafts
58. Japanese sports
59. Why do Japanese work hard?
60. Japanese group consciousness
61. The Japanese diet
62. Japanese cuisine and foreign cuisine in Japan
63. Interesting differences in customs and beliefs
64. The Japanese character

Part B: Long journal articles

1. "How Japan Does It" (Economy and Business)
Time, March 30, 1981, pp. 4 -11
2. "Japan: Special Issue"
Time, August 1, 1983, pp. 18-84
 - a. All the hazards and threats of success, pp. 20-25
 - b. The powers that be, pp. 26-27
 - c. An interview with Prime Minister Nakasone, p. 28
 - d. History: How Japan turned West, pp. 37
 - e. Fighting it out: Business, pp. 38-43
 - f. Culture: The art of all they do, pp. 44-48
 - g. Design: The just so of the swerve and line, pp. 49-55
 - h. Science, p. 56
 - i. Computers, p. 57
 - j. Religion, p. 59
 - k. Medicine, pp. 61-62
 - l. Law: Land without lawyers, pp. 62-63
 - m. Education: Schooling for the common good, p. 64
 - n. Psychology: Increasing signs of stress, p. 65
 - o. Sexes: Women--A separate sphere, pp. 66-67
 - p. Others: Behavior, People, Living, Art Language, Music, Video, Books, Press, Travel, and Cinema, pp. 68-84
3. "Japan: The year 2000--various predictions"
Winds, January, 1985, pp. 9-49
4. "Japan, U.S.A.: Special Report"
Business Week, July 14, 1986, pp. 45-55
 - a. Japan, USA, pp. 45-46
 - b. The difference Japanese management makes, pp. 47-50
 - c. At Sanyo's Arkansas plant: The magic isn't working, pp. 51-52
 - d. Japanese capital finds a home in middle America, pp. 52-53
 - e. Will Sake and Sour Mash go together?, pp. 53-55
5. "Trade Face-off"
Time, April 13, 1987, pp. 28-42
 - a. A dangerous U.S.-Japan confrontation, pp. 28-37
 - b. A mix of admiration, envy and anger: The American public is less worried than Washington, pp. 38-39
 - c. The challenges of success, pp. 40-41
6. "Rethinking Education: Out with the Old, In with the New"
Look Japan, December, 1987, pp. 6-10
7. "Asia: Now the world is Japan's co-prosperity sphere"
The Economist, August 13, pp. 27-30

8. "Japan's Influence in America"
Business Week, July 11, 1988, pp. 64-75
 - a. Japan's clout in the U.S., pp. 64-75
 - b. When Japan's lobbyists talk, Washington doesn't listen, pp. 67-69
 - c. On the campus: Fat endowments and growing clout, pp. 70-72
 - d. Japan digs deep to win the hearts and minds of America, pp. 73-75
9. "Asia in the 1990's: All you need to know about the booming Pacific Rim"
Fortune, Fall, 1989 Special Issue, Vol. 120, No. 13
 - a. Understanding how Japan works, pp. 14-18
 - b. A strategic guide to the rim, pp. 72-73
 - c. How to act once you get there, pp. 87-88
 - d. So you'll be moving to Asia, pp. 91-98
 - e. Meet 25 people you ought to know, pp. 101-114
10. "Fear and Loathing of Japan"
Fortune, February 26, 1990, pp. 50-60
11. "What Japan Thinks of Us"
Newsweek, April 2, 1990, pp. 18-25